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22. — *The Political Economy of Art: being the Substance (with Additions) of Two Lectures delivered at Manchester, July 10th and 13th, 1857.* By JOHN RUSKIN, M. A. New York: Wiley and Halstead. 1858. 12mo. pp. 125.

IF Mr. Ruskin, being profoundly ignorant of the Sanscrit, should write a Sanscrit grammar, we have no doubt that it would be worth reading. He cannot well know less of Sanscrit than he does of the first principles of Political Economy. He confesses that he never read any author in that department, "except Adam Smith, twenty years ago," and Adam Smith he must have read to very little purpose. He would cherish art by establishing at the expense of government trial-schools to determine who were embryo artists, and a second order of schools for their education, by providing at the public charge employment for those who cannot find it otherwise, and by ornamental works undertaken by the state for the sole purpose of encouraging genius. He incidentally urges the expediency of restoring their old vitality, powers, and privileges to the trade-guilds. In fine, he deems the "Laissez-faire" principle wholly inapplicable, nay, essentially injurious, to art and skilled labor of all kinds. It does not appear whether his repudiation of that principle extends to agricultural products and the simpler manufactures. He may perhaps have learned to regard art and its creations, as most modern legislators have regarded coined gold and silver, as exempt from the operation of else universal laws. But while it has not a word about political economy that seems to us of any worth, this little volume is eloquent and instructive, full of valuable hints to artists and their patrons, of parenthetical enunciations of great truths in the realms of form and color, and of earnest outbursts of fastidious but ardent enthusiasm. It contains also admirably framed diatribes on the use and abuse of wealth, and the accountableness of its possessors. All the political economy there is in it might be expunged, and still there would remain a treatise amply worthy of the author and of the cause to which he devotes his time and pen.

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23. — *Debit and Credit.* Translated from the German of GUSTAV FREYTAG, by L. C. C. With a Preface by CHRISTIAN CHARLES JOSIAS BUNSEN, D. D., D. C. L., D. Ph. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1858. 12mo. pp. 564.

THE Chevalier Bunsen is the last indorser whom we should be apt
VOL. LXXXVI. — NO. 179. 50

to trust for a novel ; and his learned, judicious, and instructive Preface, should any one read it first, would, we confess, excite the expectation of wise and elaborate dulness in the work which it ushers into notice. But whoso forms this expectation will be happily disappointed. We have our doubts whether the author ever thought of the threefold "beautiful fundamental idea of the book," which Bunsen ascribes to it. It is a novel of society, rich in its lifelike representations of Prusso-German, Prusso-Jewish, and Polish character. The story embraces a remarkable number of strongly drawn *dramatis personæ*, and a great variety of exciting incident. The conversations are lively and natural ; the descriptions of scenery, skilful and vivid ; the narrative, well sustained and of unflagging interest ; the moral tone, uniformly true and high. We have seldom read a tale more worthy to be read, and if this furnishes a fair criterion of the author's powers, he must take rank among the first novelists of the century. We ought in justice to add, that the translation is in so pure an English style, that we should hardly know, except from the title-page, that it had a German original.

24. — *Parthenia : or, The Last Days of Paganism*. By ELIZA BUCKMINSTER LEE. Boston : Ticknor and Fields. 1858. 12mo. pp. 420.

WE will not undertake to give an analysis of this story ; for no mere outline could do it justice, — its merit lies less in the invention than in the execution. The principal characters are the historical personages of the age and court of the Emperor Julian, and authentic history of course limited the range which would else have been left free to the inventive faculty, so that the work is one of imagination more than of fancy. And it is pre-eminently the work of an imagination intensely vivid and sight-like. In no similar fiction has there been a clearer conception or a truer portraiture of the men and manners of a long-past era. We can detect no anachronisms ; and, while the diction is perspicuous, easy, and natural, it is entirely free from new-coined words, phrases, and idioms, so that there is no discrepancy between style and thought. In an historical point of view, "Parthenia" has a very high value. Its scene is laid in one of the few momentous crises in the fortunes of collective humanity ; and it seems to us that the spirit of the times and the actors may be much better learned from this fictitious narrative, than from any formal history.